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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2006

#### In Today's Papers

##### Kretschmer Remarks on Turkey-EU Relations

Radikal reports that in an interview with the BBC Turkish service Hansjoerg Kretschmer, the outgoing head of the European Commission delegation to Turkey, said that he did not expect a major crisis would occur even if Turkey fails to open up its ports and airports to Greek Cypriot ships and planes by the end of this year. However, he stressed that Ankara must implement the customs union protocol in the long run and such a solution is in the best interest of all the parties. On the role of army-government relations, Kretschmer said that the EU does not expect any immediate changes and noted that civilian authority should be above the military as a necessary component of democracy as well as a criterion for Turkey's EU membership. Kretschmer expressed belief that an amendment to Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code before the end of this year is likely.

##### Baydemir Urges Ankara to Share Authority

Sabah, Vatan, Cumhuriyet, Radikal, Zaman and others report the mayor of the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir Osman Baydemir told a conference on 'The EU, Turkey and the Kurds' that local resources such as oil reserves in the southeastern Turkish province of Batman as well as hydroelectric power plants should be used by the local administrations in Turkey. Baydemir told the European Parliament-sponsored conference in Brussels that each province should be ruled by a single administrator instead of the existing system of a governor appointed by the central government in Ankara. Papers comment that Baydemir was asking for control of resources worth USD 2.8 billion.

##### US to Shift Policy in Iraq

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others say a report drafted by the 'Iraq Study Group' headed by former state secretary James Baker argues the ideal of establishing democracy in

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Iraq should be abandoned and American troops should be gradually pulled out to be deployed in bases outside of the country. According to the British Times, the report finds a total withdrawal 'inadvisable.' It does not recommend a partition of Iraq, but advises that authority be delegated to autonomous regions, leaving in Baghdad a 'framework government' responsible only for foreign affairs, border security and the distribution of oil revenues. The report is expected to be released following the November Congressional elections in the United States.

#### Editorial Commentary on Iraq

Soli Ozel commented in the mass appeal Sabah (10/19): "There might be some fundamental changes ahead in the US policy for the Middle East after the upcoming Congressional elections. The fact of the matter is that the US imperial project, shaped by neo-cons and symbolized by the war in Iraq, has completely collapsed, and the administration will have to face that reality somehow. With the war in Iraq and its aftermath, the US not only engaged in a wrong project but also pursued a self-destructive policy to eliminate its global influence. This war, started by the US, only helped Iran to gain more strength while Israel became weaker and provided a helping hand for terrorism and other extremism. The American political system cannot possibly bear this burden any longer. A Democratic majority in the Congress might be the beginning of the US pulling out from Iraq. The Iraq Working Group has prepared a report on the situation that will be made to public after the Congressional elections. According to information leaked to press, the report clearly suggests a complete change in the current Iraq policy, including a plan for withdrawal. On the other hand, a sudden US pull out from Iraq will feed the conditions for civil war and will create a whirlpool from which Turkey cannot stay away. Therefore, Turkey must deal with the Kurdish issue domestically and must not think that the PKK-Iraq connection is the only way to handle the PKK

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problem."

Omer Lutfu Mete commented in the conservative-nationalist Tercuman (10/19): "The US has always come up with a denial whenever a story appeared on the American intention eventually to divide Iraq. Now the denial has reached a crescendo with President Bush also emphasizing that Iraq should not be divided. Putting all of these statements together somehow does not jibe with the spirit of the new Iraqi constitution which was shaped by and under the influence of neo-con policy. The Iraq constitution foresees a federal system based on ethnic and sectarian differences and this is what Iraq is heading toward. If President Bush is sincere in his words, he's making very contradictory remarks to other policy makers in Iraq, not to mention Fox Television which is also in favor of a divided Iraq."

#### Bush Sets New Space Doctrine

Hurriyet reports citing the Washington Post say President Bush has signed a new National Space Policy that asserts a right to deny access to space to anyone 'hostile to US interests.' The document encourages private enterprise in space and characterizes the US space diplomacy in terms of persuading other nations to support US policy. It said 'Freedom of action in space is as important to the United States as air power and sea power.' The document emphasized that the US has become increasingly dependent on satellite communication, as have providers of cellphones, personal navigation devices and ATMs.

#### OECD Report Praises Turkey's Economic Performance

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Radikal, Zaman and others report Jose Angel Gurria, visiting Secretary General of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), said at a joint press conference with Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul that Turkey has become the fastest growing country among OECD members thanks to its economic program and structural reforms that were enacted after the economic crisis in 2001. Gurria advised Turkey to reduce interest rates, encourage direct foreign capital inflow, restrict the unregistered economy, create new jobs, and render the agriculture sector competitive. Gurria also released 'Economic Survey of Turkey 2006' report which said Turkey can achieve sustainable growth if it

continues economic reforms.

TV Highlights  
NTV, 7.00 A.M.

#### Domestic News

- A 260-strong Turkish contingent will depart Thursday from the Mediterranean port of Mersin to join UNIFIL in Lebanon.
- Turkish Cyprus 'Foreign Minister' Turgay Avci is in Ankara to meet with Prime Minister Erdogan and Foreign Minister Gul on Thursday. Avci, the leader of the Turkish Cypriot 'Freedom and Reform Party' (ORP), became the new foreign minister following the break-up of the coalition government in north Cyprus last month.
- State Minister for economy Ali Babacan said the block sale of the state-owned Halkbank would be completed soon.
- Deputy Prime Minister Abdullatif Sener said the share of foreign capital in Turkish banking would increase to 30 percent in six months.

#### International News

- EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn told German lawmakers in Berlin that even though the momentum for reform had slowed down in Turkey over the past year, the EU should not forget its commitment toward Turkey.

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- The US Congress has approved a planned sale to the Turkish Air Force of 30 F-16 Block 50 fighter aircraft and related equipment and services, worth up to USD 2.9 billion.
- Doctors in Gaza have reported previously unseen injuries from Israeli weapons including severe burning and deep internal wounds, often resulting in amputations or death.
- A top Russian official said his country would view the planned deployment of US missile defense components in eastern and central Europe as a security threat and take retaliatory measures.
- The Guardian reported the Iranian government has banned high-speed internet links to stifle domestic opposition and combat the influence of Western culture.

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